

Reflections on March 2010 Internship Field-based Activities

As a practicing Director of Technology in La Vernia ISD, my Internship activities are naturally somewhat different from those of the typical student. After discussing the best course of action with Dr. Abernathy, we agreed that under the guidance of my Mentor, LVISD Superintendent Dr. Tom Harvey, I would pick tasks that I perform as a part of my duties, but examine them with a critical eye towards which ISTE Technology Facilitator (TF) Standards and Performance Indicator they address. Additionally, two separate, special technology tasks are designated as Internship Projects.

March began as I continued the February task of updating and submitting our ePlan, as well as updating our technology policies. Updating the LVISD ePlan Long-Range Technology Plan, and our technology usage policies, is essential to insuring my teachers have the support they need to help students learn. This activity helped me meet multiple Performance Indicators under Standard TF-VIII, Leadership and Vision, in which educational technology facilitators must contribute to the shared vision for campus and District integration of technology while fostering an environment and culture conducive to the realization of the vision.

I also attended professional development during March targeted at learning how to use and support our new Aware Student Data Analysis software, learning what Internet 2 has to offer us, and attending an overview of TEA's Project Share, our new eportfolio initiative for students and teachers designed to facilitate performance-based assessment. These tasks helped me meet multiple performance indicators under Standard IV, Assessment and Evaluation. This Standard requires technology facilitators to apply technology in order to facilitate various assessment and evaluation strategies. Williamson and Redish (2009) note the importance of Standard IV by

reminding us that “In the current age of accountability, educational leaders are required to be more skilled in assessment and evaluation than their predecessors were” (p. 77).

During my Aware Student Data Analysis training at Region 20, I was reminded of Dana’s (2009) illustration that “Simply put, data analysis can be defined as creating a picture of what you have learned based on a careful, thoughtful and systemic look at your data” (p. 107). The analysis tools and reports embodied within the Aware program will be essential to helping our teachers create a picture of student learning in LVISD.

My other major task in March was performing my periodic website review and update; while I have a Web Master under me, the site ultimately falls under my responsibility, so I oversee operations, planning and upgrades from the higher level. During my website review and update activity, I was reminded of Solomon and Schrum’s (2007) observation that “The web is changing, too. It has morphed from static HTML pages where readers could find and copy information to interactive services, where visitors can create and post information” (p. 8). My new awareness of the importance of website interactivity is a direct result of my learning throughout my degree program, and this activity helped me meet Performance Indicator TF-V.D, requiring that I use technology to communicate and collaborate with my peers, parents, and the larger community to nurture and support student learning.

While reflecting on the month’s activities, I gained a deeper understanding of the importance of helping my teachers use technology to better assess student learning. This connects to my past learning as I wrote a grant built around performance-based assessment which was not awarded; I am, however, endeavoring to utilize all the research and planning that went into that grant to support my mission as a technology facilitator supporting assessment.

My future learning has been impacted by realization that the web is changing, and so we must change, too. No longer can we be satisfied with a static website that acts as an online directory and newsletter. As Director of Technology, I will apply myself to researching new website features and vendors based on the knowledge I gained during my Web Design class and throughout my degree program.

Viewing my performance on these tasks from an educator's point of view, I learned that my teachers need assistance in learning how technology can assist them in embedding performance-based assessment and eportfolios into their instruction. My performance during these tasks was impacted by this realization, and I am seeking to learn new ways to become involved in the assessment process in support of my teachers and students.

Based on these activities, I will take a new knowledge of the promise of Internet 2 to future contexts; Internet 2 offers new experiences supported by higher levels of bandwidth and less network traffic, so it can offer support for virtual online environments and extensive multimedia eportfolios, improving learning and assessment.

As a learner, I gained a new appreciation for the role of assessment in learning. Before my degree program, I thought that 90% of a teacher's effort should be placed on teaching, but thanks to my new learning, I realize that Backwards Design principals require teachers to plan assessment, and the knowledge that is to be measured, before they plan learning activities. Based on this knowledge, I realized that the more I can help provide ease of access to alternative assessment tools, the freer my teachers will be to incorporate performance-based assessment.

I was effective as a learner as I successfully focused on the instructional implications of the training I received in my professional development sessions more than on the technological implications. I will transfer my learning to new situations as I shift my emphasis during teacher

training from providing knowledge of how the technology tools work to providing knowledge regarding how these tools can be used to teach and to assess learning.

As a lifelong learner, I must perform further research regarding data analysis methodologies for analyzing student performance on high-stakes testing at the objective and indicator level; in order for me to provide the most appropriate training to my teachers on how to use tools such as Aware to analyze student performance data, I must learn more about the detail and the indicators they are examining, and what this tells us about teaching and learning.

References:

- Williamson, J. & Redish, T. (2009). *Technology Facilitation and Leadership Standards: What Every K-12 Leader Should Know and Be Able To Do*. Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology in Education.
- Dana, N. (2009). *Leading with Passion and Knowledge: The Principal as Action Researcher*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Solomon, G. & Schrum, L. (2007). *Web 2.0: New Tools, New Schools*. Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology in Education.